# THE WILD DUN

## A LOVE STORY OF THE NORTHWEST WOODS

By BERNICE POTTER

### Who's Who in the Story

GLORIA REILLY, a magnificent young person, who was the richest and most beautiful girl in Minnesota.

GOLDEN DICK REILLY, her father, who never knew which fork to use at dinner, but was, nevertheless, as likable and genuine as man could be.

WAYNE REYNOLDS, to whom a Harvard education and Pilgrim ancestors proved a drawback until—almost the end of the story.

GOLDEN DICK REILLY placed his strong, be-ringed fingers on the cover of his roll-topped desk and pressed gently. To see the corrugated mahogany ripple down from some mysterious hiding place never failed to give him pleasure. He liked his desk, he liked his mahogany filing cabinet with its secret springs and catches and concealed compartments. The week before he had sent clear to Copenhagen for a typewriter stand in which the machine sank, like the woman in the magician's trick, into some mysterious well of mahogany from which there was no returning—unless one knew that a leather tack, third from the left on the corner, had to be pushed.

According to gossip, Golden Dick Reilly had spent $20,000 on his office. What of it? He owned the nineteen-story building in which his office was housed, a goodly block of stock in the Northern Lumbermen's Bank, chastely ensconced in marble walled splendor on the main floor; he owned a Duluth city addition, a line of cargo-barges that plied to Chicago and Buffalo—and $1,000,000 worth of copper up on the range.

Golden Dick Reilly wasn't an office man, as his hands and his skin and his shoulders bore witness; and it pleased him to beguile his imprisonment with all the devices conjured up by an ingenious trade-catalogue house. His great wealth had tricked and caught him like a fox in a trap. All he could do now was make his chains as little irksome as possible.

The clock on his desk, which told everything but fortunes, indicated it was Dec. 1, cloudy with rising barometer, 72 Fahrenheit and 3 o'clock. From the lake beneath his windows thin wraiths of steam twisted waveringly upward. Superior was cooling off. Dick Reilly drew on his sable-lined overcoat of hunter's-green broadcloth, crushed down his fur cap and rang for the elevator. The bank was closed, but an usher hurried to unbolt the heavy iron-ribbed door.

"Carrington in?" he boomed.

The boy pointed to the President's office. The office of Preston Carrington was not like his. "Seems kinda gloomy," Reilly had once protested. But, then, the Carringtons came from Boston, where Preston Carrington's father used the same desk that had belonged to Abijah Carrington in the days not long after the Revolution.

Preston Carrington looked up and smiled. The hard gray of his eyes softened, and the lines around his mouth relaxed. Representing worlds so dissimilar that communication seemed fairly impossible, the two men liked each other. Dick Reilly was to him neither uncultured nor absurd. Something of the intrepid romance of the man's past persisted even in his check-suited, diamond-ringed, present. In his eyes burned the spirit of the pioneer, and his face bore the scars of a thousand hardships endured with a gay heart. Golden Dick Reilly was to Preston Carrington something more than a queer bird about whom he talked when each year he went home to Boston. Golden Dick Reilly was a person, magnificent, ridiculous and just a little pathetic.

"Glory's givin' a blow-out to-night," Dick Reilly was saying, "and she'll be expectin' you and the Missus." He could never suspect the pleading that burned in his eyes.

Carrington shifted uneasily. He knew very well that Mrs. Carrington, also from Beacon Hill, Boston, did not share her husband's enthusiasm. Perhaps it was only because she was homesick that she found this new land unlovely and the men it bore uncouth. Perhaps she did not intend to be ungracious and unkind, but there was no doubt about it—Mrs. Carrington did not fit.

Carrington hedged. "We've a guest," he began, "—friend of young Pres at Harvard. He's been sent out here by the Atlantic-Pacific Mining people. Clever chap." He realized he wasn't making much headway. "Mrs. Carrington begrudges every minute he's not talking to her about the boys and Harvard and Boston."

"That's easy," Reilly combatted. "Bring him along. Can't be too many for Glory." A glow of paternal pride mounted slowly on his weather-stained cheeks. "My Glory's a knock-out, if I do say it as shouldn't. Ain't she, now, Carrington—ain't she?"

Preston Carrington looked away, a little embarrassed by the passion of the man's appeal. "She is," he said.

GLORIA REILLY was a magnificent young person, as likable and as genuine as her father. And as ridiculous! Gloria Reilly bore the title of the Copper Princess, and it belonged. She was the richest girl and the most beautiful in the whole of Minnesota, perhaps in the whole world; and her father loved her even as he feared his two older daughters, who were conventional and quick-witted and successful.

Single-handed they had fought their way into what they considered the right set, married shrewdly and departed, well endowed and at once, from the mansion of their father. The relief at their going was mutual. But Gloria never got exasperated with him or made fun of him or tried to improve him or his house or his grammar.

"Glory's different," he confided once to Carrington. "Cally and Mart was always smart, but just a mite bitin' and outspoken—not but what I'm proud of them and all they've done," he amended.

"I know," Carrington answered. "Gloria's companionable. That's the way I feel about young Pres."

Companionable—that was the word. He would have given a cool million if he, too, could find words the way Carrington did, or if he could remember which was the salad-fork, and that you didn't use it for pie. He didn't want his girls to be ashamed of him—but they always would be, except Gloria.

"About to-night, then?" he persisted a little shyly.

"We'll come—glad to, too." Cornelia would have to be made a martyr of once again; too bad. He was sorry he had taken her away from Boston, from the cultured, delightful, inconsequential world to which she belonged. He was sorrier for Dick Reilly.

"It's little enough to do for him," he argued to himself. "Besides, he has turned a sow's ear into a silk purse for the Carringtons."

HE postponed telling his wife their social obligation, however, until they were seated at dinner. In the soft glow of the candles Mrs. Carrington looked very pretty. Young Wayne Reynolds, from Harvard and Boston, with his chatter about the people and things she cared for, had brought a flush of pleasure to her cheeks. Why couldn't she find enjoyment in this new country? Still, some people just cannot be transplanted—neither Cornelia Carrington nor Golden Dick Reilly.

The President of the Northern Lumbermen's Bank fingered the thin stalk of his wineglass. "I—I've made an engagement for the three of us this evening," he began. He was trying to be casual, but he avoided catching his wife's eye. "We're taking Wayne over to Reilly's. Gloria's giving a function, a blow-out, as her parent phrases it. It will be an initiation for Wayne into the social terrors of the Northwest. You know the Reilly functions are always rather something in the way of a spectacle, a Klaw and Erlanger first night.

They all laughed.

"Not Golden Dick Reilly?" Reynolds demanded. "Well, I am getting on. That's a name to conjure with."

Mrs. Carrington shrugged her shoulders. "Wait and see." Then she turned her eyes to her husband. "Oh, Pres, to-night? I thought it would be so jolly just to stay here and talk."

"I'm sorry. I said we'd come. Besides,"—he smiled again,—"we ought to give Wayne a chance to meet the Copper Princess."

Reynolds laughed. "The family does sound a bit metallurgic, doesn't it?"

"Being a mining engineer, you'll feel right at home," Carrington combatted. "Anyway," he amended, "it will be something in the line of an adventure."

Architecturally the Reilly mansion belonged to the late Grant period.

"I made my wad in lumber," he had blustered, "and I build my house of wood."

Though in a moment of sentimental weakness he yielded to a cheaper material, it must be admitted that he built his house of a great deal of wood. It had cupolas and conservatories and turrets. Dick Reilly introduced the first porte-cochere into St. Louis County, and he ordered fastened to every available projection of his mansion deep festoons of wooden scrollwork. It represented a lumberman's dream of heaven; it was terrible and magnificent.

When it came to the interior, his imagination had run riot. He ordered five hundred rolls of red Brussels carpet, and he demanded that even the floor of his attic be covered. He purchased everything that caught his fancy, from hand-painted beer-mugs to hammered brass cuspidors.

Having exhausted the supplies of Duluth, he made a special trip to Minneapolis, but his ultimate resource became a mail-order catalogue.

"Wish I'd seen this first," he complained. "It's got more things than I ever thought was."

There was only one thing he brought down from the woods—a hatrack. In the old days, with ten dollars of money with which he should have bought sugar and coffee and strip bacon, he had purchased the "golden oak" atrocity and carted it back to the Reilly shack in the lumber camp.

WAYNE REYNOLDS THREW HIMSELF IN FRONT OF THE GIRL AND CRUSHED HER BACK FROM THE TRACK.

"We don't need it no more than a toad needs a tail," he had confided to the merchant, "but I want it. It's kinda purty."

They hadn't needed it, so Mrs. Reilly informed him, and she could be shrewish when her temper was roused.

"Dick Reilly, you'll die in the poorhouse," she had screamed. Unlucky Nelly! He was still only a lumber-cruiser the winter she died. He felt sorry at her death, and a little guilty, but he did not mourn her.

"Poor Nelly, she was all beat out," he had said. "Things was always hard for her—and she made 'em harder."

AFTER the death of Nelly Reilly, the wheel of fortune began to turn. With his winnings at poker Dick Reilly commenced, on each of his expeditions for the company, to blaze a small tract for himself. No man in the Northwest was a better judge of timber than he. He knew trees as a gem merchant knows jewels.

At this time he moved his three little girls to Duluth, where they lived with Mrs. O'Shaughnessy, the wife of his old camp foreman, and went to school. He was lonely without them, especially without little Gloria. Five-year-old Gloria was, in the terminology of the camp, a wild un and a prime favorite.

FORTUNE in the Northwest knows not moderation. Dick Reilly drew aces. Under the land from which his forests had been cut slept the riches of an empire. Millions of dollars in copper had waited eons for a fool or a dreamer to find it.

There the ore lies so near the surface in the range beyond Duluth that only the most primitive and inexpensive methods are needed—a steam shovel, a score of men and cars to convey the metal to the freight-cars. In six months Dick Reilly was a rich man, in six years a Croesus. Even he had little vision of his wealth. He only knew now he could buy all the things he had admired in the company store. He learned at last it had become no longer dignified for him to operate the steam shovel. Then he began to experiment with his fortune, like a jumper who each trial raises the rod he has to clear one notch. At last he discovered the stock exchange. There is little romance left but gambling for a man who has been a boss logger and whose horizon is choked down to the four walls of an office.

The year after Dick Reilly built his house he sent Cally and Mart to boarding school in the East. Gloria stayed at home and attended the convent.

In two years Mart and Cally, with their New York clothes and their New York convictions, overawed their father and they played their advantage ruthlessly. A New York decorator came and conquered the house that had been a lumberman's vision of paradise. Nothing remained—except the hatrack.

"That's mine, by God!" he thundered. "And it stays!"

Even Cally and Mart recognized the better part of valor.

Then Cally married. Six months later Mart departed with her New York husband for worthier fields to conquer. Dick Reilly drew a long breath, and ordered the pool table brought back into the drawing room.

"Mart would throw a fit," giggled Gloria.

Dick Reilly chuckled. "There's a couple of thousand miles now between me and Mart's education. St. Anthony keep her safe—and a long ways off."

When Gloria was eighteen Dick Reilly fought a silent battle with his conscience. Was it his duty to send her away from him, too? Finally he put it up to her.

"If you think you oughta go, Glory, why—it's only fair you should." He was getting through it better than he had anticipated. "I reckon I'll still have a few faults left for you to work on."

The eyes that Gloria Reilly lifted to his were like his own. "Pa!" There was no misreading the protest in her voice. "I don't want to go, and you know it."

And Eastern education for the Copper Princess was vetoed.

THE entertainments of Golden Dick Reilly were municipal affairs. Everybody in town received an invitation and nearly every one accepted. Dick Reilly had no fine feeling for the finesses of social cleavage, and Gloria was too intent upon living to analyze the difficulties of which so far she had never been conscious.

"'Omnia omnibus' is the Reilly motto," explained Preston Carrington. "You can dance or play cards or bowl or shoot craps. Their refreshments resemble the days of the Second Empire, and the Reilly wine cellar is the last great fount of eternal inebriation."

Several hundred people had already accepted when the Preston Carringtons and Wayne Reynolds arrived. Dick Reilly glowed his pleasure.

"Know'd you come," he boomed. "Howdy, Missus Carrington. Cold enough for ye? Young Reynolds—oh, yes, glad to meet ye." With shrewd eyes he appraised the latest representative of the Atlantic-Pacific Mining Company. "Come along and meet Glory."

In the ball room two bands of colored musicians exhorted to the dance. There was no intermission. The last dying notes of the saxaphone were caught up with a blare of triumph by its rival en face—and a new dance was on. Confetti and gay-colored paper streamers blurred the air. From the floor Dick Reilly picked up a dance programme and handed it to his guest. On one side were engraved the orders, on the other was a deed of sale to ten lots in the new Reilly addition.

Dick Reilly beamed. "Pretty smart, now, ain't it? Glory thought it up," he boomed. "Look, there she is—Hi, Glory."

It was the end of the dance, and a dozen men, with the tactics of the gridiron struggled to gain the attention of some one completely hidden by them from the eyes of Wayne Reynolds.

"She's there, where the crowd's thickest." He made no attempt to conceal his pride. "Hi, Glory," he bellowed.

Slowly a pathway formed between the rows of black-coated young men and a girl emerged. Wayne Reynolds of Harvard and Boston felt a quickening of his pulses. There was that in the beauty of Gloria Reilly to awaken forgotten memories of half glimpsed loveliness of spring and moonlight and young aspen trees. It contained something candid and gay and not a little imperious. Her gown, of a soft material, had a sheen of gold and it hung with revealing discretion to the slender lines of her body. True to her Gaelic ancestry her hair grew smooth and black away from a low forehead, and her eyes were blue.

"Here's a young feller come all the way from Boston to dance with you," called her father.

A quick flush of protest stained her cheeks. "Pa," she said, "you're awful."

Wayne Reynolds caught here eye and smiled. "He's right, you know. May I have this one?"

Without waiting to argue, he slipped his arm around her, and they moved out on the floor. The eyes of Golden Dick Reilly followed them a long time with contentment.

"Pa never even told me your name," she said at last, "not that it matters when you can dance like this."

"Let's get out of here," he urged. "before nine hundred of your fellow-townsmen trample me to death. Then I promise to tell you everything."

She nodded, and he followed her down the stairs. "Come on," she ordered. From the golden-oak hatrack she caught up a coat. "It's Pa's," she said. "There's one for you. I've got to have a breath."

Out into the night he followed her, where a winter moon mounted into a high cold heaven. Against the sky rose the great shoulder of mountain that shuts off the forest where, when the wind blows from the north, sounds the howls of the coyote.

Her coat held tightly around her, she drew a deep breath of the pine fragrance.

"I suppose I ought to tell you you'll probably get pneumonia for this," Wayne Reynolds protested.

She looked up at him and smiled. "Oh, gee! smell the cold." With a sudden gesture she pointed. "I was born beyond that hill there."

"I know," he said.

Again her eyes caught his. "Who told you?"

"The Carringtons."

"Oh!" There was a moment of silence. "Well, I'm me, and they're them." She stopped suddenly, puzzled for a word. "We're different—another run of sheep." Her mouth twisted into a droll smile. "I reckon she thinks I'm a—sketch."

Wayne Reynolds laughed. "Perhaps she envies you."

"Perhaps." She shrugged her shoulders; then with shrewd eyes she appraised him. "You're one of them, too, I bet."

"I went to Harvard with their son." He smiled again. "Does that convict me?"

"Convict?" She shook her head. "You use such funny words. So did Mart and Cally. I'm not educated." She turned sharply toward the doorway. "Come on."

As Wayne Reynolds replaced the coats on the cheap gilt hooks he felt she was still watching. There was something hostile about her, and yet not a little wistful.

From beyond the heavy curtains in the drawing room came the sound of voices. Mrs. Carrington was speaking; the other woman he did not recognize.

"One can buy anything these days—and in this country. Witness the Reillys," Mrs. Carrington's soft voice was drawling.

The other woman laughed. "Even a very presentable husband. What's a little thing like breeding? Are you holding your thumbs for the safety of Mr. Reynolds? With her millions and her shoulders even a Pilgrim father would find it difficult." She laughed again. "Do come. I'm dying to see the library."

Slowly Wayne Reynolds turned to the girl beside him. "On cold nights I notice the coyotes and the timber-wolves come right down into drawing rooms."

For a long moment she stood there very quiet. When she looked at him her eyes seemed black against the whiteness of her face. "It must be very fine to be well bred and come from Boston, Mr. Reynolds." Her voice was low, but every word was spoken with a cold distinctness. "Then you can have just as rotten manners as you want. Good evening, Mr. Reynolds."

With a quick gesture he caught her wrist as she turned from him. "Look here," he said, "you can't condemn me too just because I wasn't born in this blooming country." He was standing close to her now, and he could feel her body tremble with anger and misery. His fingers tightened roughly on her arm. "I think I've been waiting about half my life to meet you, and I'm not going to lose you now because a couple of rotten gossips talked too loud through a velvet curtain."

A flaming signal glowed on her cheeks and her eyes glinted. "'With millions and her shoulders,'" she